ABSTRACT

The present invention comprises a bifurcated interface, including apparatus and methods/processes, for integrated use in a fax-to-email system, and the invention further comprises the enhanced communication system, including apparatus and methods, which results from the integration in the fax-to-email system of the bifurcated interface. In accordance with the present invention, the bifurcated interface provides an alternative or additional method for command entry to the interface of a fax-to-email system through a remote, commercially available, personal digital assistant or like device (all such devices currently known or developed hereafter being collectively referred to herein as "personal data assistant" or "PDA") modified by software to perform functions of the present invention. Delivery of commands, and other data, from the PDA is made, preferably, via infrared signals, but, alternatively, by direct cable syncing and other techniques known to those in the PDA field. Thus, the interface of the enhanced communication system of the present invention is bifurcated having a portable traveler portion (also referred to herein as the "interface traveler" or "traveler"), embodied by the programmed PDA, and a host portion (also referred to herein as the "interface host" or "host") in a more permanent connection with the fax function of the fax-to-email system. The PDA, when loaded with and operating the software in accordance with the present invention, functions as the interface traveler portion, and becomes (at least temporarily) a specially programmed data entry tool with command communicating ability and a protocol shared by (or matched to) the interface host portion. The system can also be used in cooperation with Internet Web service for reporting, accounting, information services, and user interaction.

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